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# Victoria Street Newz

“All  
the  
news  
that  
fits,  
we  
print”

April 2008

Vol. 5 No. 1



## Demythologizing Poverty

by W. Robert Arnold

Over the next several issues of this paper I will be submitting a series of articles debunking the mythology about poverty. Myths are a part of the widely held opinions and beliefs common to a culture. This mainstream body of what is assumed to be knowledge is often called the hegemony. Unfortunately, not all of the beliefs included in the “common knowledge” are actually true. Therefore, it is our duty to test those beliefs to make sure that the ones we do accept as true are indeed true.

For many years I have been becoming aware of the different beliefs that people have about poverty and about poor people. I have discovered that many of those beliefs are not only wrong, but also used to hurt poor people and to work against the interests of poor people. It is for this reason that I think this series of articles is an important undertaking

and could very well yield some shift in attitude that could help the cause of poor people.

This then is a challenge to the readers, especially those readers who are in positions of power over poor people and who are in a position to change the rules and regulations with which poor people must deal in their everyday lives. I am thinking here of politicians, police, social workers and welfare workers. I am also thinking of parents and the owners of businesses whose opinions of poor people are so coloured and so often skewed by the widely held erroneous beliefs that exist in our society about poverty.

In each issue I will deal with one myth. I would like to just list them here so that you can begin to look at them and test them for yourself.

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# About Street Newz

“Building Bridges  
within our Downtown Community”

Coordinator: Janine Bandcroft  
Deliveries: Nancy Raycroft  
Distribution Coordinator: John Chomyn

Founded in 2004, Victoria Street Newz welcomes written submissions including interviews, event reviews, cartoons, poetry, photographs, or artwork, but we can't guarantee everything will be published. We reserve the right to edit, and will not print anything libelous, racist, sexist, or homophobic. Letters sent to the editor are assumed to be for publication, must include phone number or email (if possible, for confirmation) and may be edited for length. You can publish using a pseudonym, or anonymously.

We are devoted to a triple bottom line philosophy - concerned about our environmental and social, as well as financial well-being.

You can contribute to social change by supporting the Victoria Street Newz team, by pondering the root causes of poverty, and by working for peaceful, non-violent change.

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**1027 Pandora Ave  
Coast Salish Territory  
Victoria, B.C.  
V8V 3P6**

**or leave a message at  
250-383-5144  
ext 0137**

**[streetnewz@islandnet.com](mailto:streetnewz@islandnet.com)  
[relativenewz.ca](http://relativenewz.ca)**



## INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION

Victoria Street Newz is a proud member of the North American Street Newspaper Association and the International Network of Street Papers. The mission of NASNA is to support a street newspaper movement that creates and upholds journalistic and ethical standards while promoting self-help and empowerment among people living in poverty. INSP is an umbrella organization that provides a consultancy service for its partner papers, advises new street papers, and supports initiatives for marginalized people. Visit NASNA at [www.nasna.org](http://www.nasna.org) or the INSP at [www.street-papers.org](http://www.street-papers.org).

## JUST ANOTHER RANT

Yes indeed, four years ago this Street Newz venture was launched. I've learned many things through these years -- one thing is that i can type a lot faster if i don't capitalize.

i've also learned that anarchist tendencies aren't about razing buildings or plotting the overthrow of all things sensible to establish a tumultuous world of chaos. my own inner anarchist emerged when, after earning two degrees while participating in social justice and environmental activism, spending a year at a non-profit with a previous successful history in the small business computer world, my requests for help with start up funding were turned down by three levels of government. what's the point, i wondered, if they're not there for a venture like this, and i embraced the diy philosophy of anarchism --- do it yourself.

thankfully, in those days, cedco existed. cedco, the community economic development corporation, was set up to provide office assistance to small local business enterprises - they welcomed me and my whacky street newzpaper idea with open arms. i was offered a desk, computer, publishing software, a phone, photocopier, and encouragement for this social enterprise. when, shortly after getting the thing off the ground, i was knocked off my bike by a car door opening into my path, my parents offered to help with rent on my apartment while i healed.

because of their help, start up for the newz wasn't delayed any longer than necessary - i was anxious to get on with the project. on april 1st 2004 i had printed a 'preliminary' edition - six pages printed on 8.5 x 11 paper and stapled together. i took my little newzpaper to a peace rally and, when i was able to recover costs for its printing, decided to take a chance with the real thing. i found horizon publications, who offer recycled newsprint, and on july 1st 2004 the very first real live 'street newz' was printed.

street newz predecessors, the red zone and the victoria street press, had established a relationship with city officials, so i

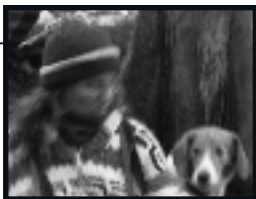
## Welcome to Year Five !!!

by Janine Bandcroft

was able to easily attain permission to resell, and willing vendors magically began to appear. ted hawryluk and his little doggie, bok, enthusiastically carried the paper. john chomyn, formerly a calgary vendor who's become an integral part of our distribution network, found me at the cedco office. marlene and gordon, early vendors, might still be alive if they'd had more resources and options (another important lesson i've learned). debbie and shirley joined the team, also ken and john and rick and berni, part-timers rose, sean, dallas, and joe, and we're happy to welcome the new guys - earl and doug. various other vendors have come and gone, selling the paper while they got set up, and we hope they've moved on to successful ventures.

there are many things i love about this project -- we work cooperatively, there are no bosses, we're all equally important. without you and the vendors, the paper doesn't go anywhere. without nancy (and thanks to the province's community volunteer program), local subscriptions would require postage rather than pedal power. without the wonderful writers, there's nothing to read. without me there's no co-ordinator, and no production cycle. without the bread and roses collective board of directors, the non-profit i set up to support the street newz, i have no structure with which to write grants and keep the thing alive.

so we're celebrating four successful years with a slightly new look and we welcome your comments. we also want to take this opportunity to THANK YOU ! for your continued support. many of you have established friendly relationships with the vendors - we really are building bridges between and among people who would not otherwise communicate. the key to ending poverty, i believe, is to dispel the myths and overcome the fears and, with your help, we'll continue doing that work for many years yet.



## OPINION

### Should Cruelty define Canada's Image abroad?

by Dr. Inge Bolin

Canada used to be respected among the nations of the world. When abroad I formerly heard people say "Canada, Land of my Dreams". Now, many walk away with pain written on their faces, or confront me asking why we Canadians do nothing about the despicable slaughter of baby seals, the largest and most brutal massacre of marine mammals on the planet.

Only two years ago, when Brigitte Bardot and Paul McCartney observed the seal hunt, some Canadians woke up. But the media has kept us in the dark about details and, contradicting innumerable reports from abroad, Loyola Hearn, the minister of Fisheries and Oceans has assured us over and again that the seal hunt is humane. Why this controversy?

"We can show you what happens on the Canadian ice. There is another TV special tonight, let,s watch it," neighbours and friends suggested during one of my stays in Europe. The film started out beautifully. Baby seals frolicked on the pristine ice, their mothers watchful and alert. The babies, whose fur had just turned silvery grey, looked up into the blue sky. Their movements reflected happiness, the innocent joy of any baby exploring the world it was born into. Being social animals they played together, enjoying each other's company.

Several boats appear. Men descend. They approach the ice floats with hurried steps. The seal mothers move nervously, coming closer to their babies who look up at the men, curious and trusting. Within moments long iron hakapiks strike the babies, noses and heads. They fall over, most of them still moving on the ice, blood seeping from their tender noses and eyes. Their mothers circle them, vocalizing in agony. The tormenters hurry on, immobilizing more babies in the same despicable way. Then they return to smash the half-dead babies again, and tear their skins off with the hakapiks. Some of the bloody skinless babies continue to move on the blood-soaked ice. The men rush off to other ice floes, engaging in this bone-chilling spectacle for weeks on end.

I felt stiff, frozen in place. Most people in the room covered their faces, crying. One neighbour said in a hoarse voice, "Now you know why we hate Canada and you do nothing about it." She left the house. Another girl followed her, "Canadian cowards," she uttered, crying uncontrollably. My friends explained that with every new seal massacre they become more disgusted with Canada. "Your country has now become the Land of our Nightmares," they said bitterly.

Videos like this one abound in the world. Even in small South-American towns where I work, people flinch when they hear "Canada" and are shocked that our 'leaders' support this heart-breaking commercial slaughter which cannot be compared to aboriginal peoples who at times caught a seal to survive, honoured its spirit and used every part of it.

Is this gruesome massacre, subsidized by tax payers and meant to clothe ignorant people, economically responsible? Even if seal skins brought a few million dollars, this is a drop in the bucket compared to lost tourist dollars and hundreds of millions Canada loses in boycotts of seafood alone. Why has Canada refused the generosity of Cathy Kangas from the US and Leni t'Hart from Holland to provide the fishermen with more money than sealing brings, and also declined these ladies' offers to help sealers develop sustainable, ethical businesses such as eco-tourism?

The heart-breaking Canadian slaughter turns the world against us. Cruelty is the worst human characteristic. Should it define Canada's image abroad? Should apathy rule Canadians until the last seals have been massacred on the fast melting ice?

*"To sin by silence when they should protest makes cowards of men."*  
Abraham Lincoln

*Dr. Inge Bolin is an anthropologist who has taught University and has been involved in research and volunteer work in different parts of the world, mainly Peru. She is a member of several animal protection agencies and is concerned about the welfare of animals at the local and global level.*





continued from cover page .....

Remember, these are the statements of the mythology, not the truths of the matter. I will illustrate the truth of the matter in the articles by giving you factual, statistical and anecdotal evidence to support my position in each case. Then, it will be up to you to decide what to believe. If your beliefs change and you find you have grown more accepting and more supportive of poor people and of their struggle, I will have done my job.

Here is the list of myths:

- 1. Poor people are lazy.
- 2. People are poor because of bad decisions they have made.
- 3. People on welfare live high off the hog.
- 4. Poor people abuse the system.
- 5. People are poor because they are drug addicts and drunks.
- 6. People are poor because they are disabled.
- 7. People are poor because they are mentally ill.
- 8. People are poor because they are stupid and uneducated.
- 9. Poor people are powerless.

Let me suggest a little exercise for you to do. Write down this list of myths yourself and decide whether you believe each of them or not, and make a note of the evidence on which you base your belief. I would be very interested to see the results of your work. If you would like to share them with me please e-mail them to me at [greyknight@shaw.ca](mailto:greyknight@shaw.ca).

I hope you are looking forward to reading these articles as much as I am looking forward to writing them.

Robert is a 65 year old man who has fought poverty, his own and others, for over 45 years. He has been an advocate for people with problems with government agencies, a writer about Welfare Law and is now President of the National Anti Poverty Organization, where he helps the voices of poor people be heard in the halls of power.



Wanted: Homeless people

I'm very concerned about the way government and society is ignoring the causes of homelessness, and I'm writing a book about you.

Are you interested in participating in my research so that I can ensure that the information is accurate?

I will pay you \$20.00 an hour for your time. It will only take an hour or two to complete the interview. You can contact me Mon – Fri, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at 386-6690. We can then arrange a meeting. I will gladly buy you lunch or a coffee on top of your payment.

I want to thank-you ahead of time for your cooperation.

TAKE ACTION --  
Sign the HOUSING NOT WAR Declaration

(reprinted from the KAIROS newsletter)

Anti-poverty advocates of the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC) and the Canadian Peace Alliance are joining forces to launch a national HOUSING NOT WAR campaign.

Canada once had a world-renowned National Housing Program - but it was scrapped in the 1990s. Soon after, municipalities across Canada declared homelessness a national disaster. Today 300,000 people in Canada experience homelessness with its violence, illness and death.

Meanwhile, Canada's military spending has skyrocketed to the highest level since WWII. In Afghanistan, Canada fights an intense counter-insurgency that a majority of Canadians do not support. In 2007-2008, \$18.2 billion will flow to war ^ 8.5% of the federal budget.

TDRC and the Canadian Peace Alliance are calling on the government to end its wasteful and destructive war in Afghanistan and invest in peace at home and abroad. They call for a one percent solution: Raise federal funding for housing by 1% to 2% (\$4 billion) of the budget.

Please consider joining in calling on the government to implement a Housing Not War strategy. Learn more, sign the declaration, and get involved at [www.housingnotwar.ca](http://www.housingnotwar.ca).



Remembering  
Steve  
Whalen

from  
Carol  
Romanow

Steve Whalen died. Perhaps just another street death and one that may be glossed over but it seems like someone somewhere has responsibility.

Steve had been living on the streets for some time and perhaps he didn't take the best care of himself. But then who does of those who live below the poverty line?

Two years ago he did manage to find housing, a landlord that would take him and his dog Sheba and allow them to live with some dignity. He did well there, yes having some problems with his diabetes and other issues in life but for the most part was managing quite well. Clean, dry and a place to rest his head with his beloved Sheba with him. Sheba always seemed to know when his diabetes was going to present a problem, she would lie with her head on his chest and be quiet.

I had the privilege of seeing this when Steve was homeless and lived over by Gorge and Tillicum and phoned the ambulance on more than one occasion when Steve would become ill. He was always polite and cheerful, regardless of how tough life was at that moment. Several times over the years he was hospitalized and some kind person he knew had always taken Sheba or else the SPCA did help out.

Things changed though, the housing he rented was one of those bought up by BC Housing, you know the supportive housing bragged about, how the province and the City were working together to provide more housing.

Steve got evicted, whether due to Sheba or other reasons is not perfectly clear but the dog was definitely NOT ALLOWED.

Steve tried to get an Advocate to help but was told by several that there was nothing anyone could do because animals were not allowed. He chose to leave rather than betray his friend of who knows how many years.

I saw him a number of times when he was on the streets and had tried to find someone or something to help him out but allow him to keep Sheba with him. No one stepped up to the plate. And now he's dead. Perhaps he was destined to pass away anyway but I for one cannot help but wonder how fast his death was speeded up by uncaring politicians and housing authorities.

What good does it do to evict a number of people to replace them in supportive housing if the original tenants are put out onto the streets? It has happened before and will happen again if we do not change how we do business regarding housing.

Housing sites vacant on Cook St, boarded up and empty. Housing sits vacant and boarded up on Fernwood and Yates St. Housing in Esquimalt saw residents of an apartment and a rooming house evicted while the property was renovated. The house on Bay and Quadra did have a fire but then was bought and converted to condos. Housing on Carlton Terrace has several building boarded up..... where did the people go? Were they rehoused or just put into the disposable pile like those on Irma Street?

How many others are there that have been evicted or lost their housing, due to a number of reasons? How many are due to the NIMBY syndrome, or even something as innocent as an animal?

Who has to take responsibility? Society, politicians, housing authorities? Faith groups? You and I ? I think it is all of us. We are being hoodwinked by the good news announcements because the truth is not told about who loses when the powers that be try to claim a Win.

Someone, somewhere has responsibility in part for Steve's death. Murder, manslaughter or carelessness or just plain lack of quality of life issues awareness.

Who will step up to the plate before we lose someone from the Humboldt St proposal due to the inability to deal with human beings in a human manner?





Show Some Gratitude  
..... part two

by cyann ray

Last month I decided to list fifty things that I’m grateful for in celebration of my 50th birthday. Time and space restrictions made this piece a two-parter. Let’s continue.....

My first B.C. boyfriend was a former “street person” known as the Joke Guy. He introduced me to a foreign but friendly underworld of panners and buskers. It was an honour to have been invited into the circle and share a brown pop with the infamous Apple Tree Gang down by the farside. I am a richer person for having lingered with those poor, forgotten faces.

It was also thru my ex that I met Reverend Al. His Open Door (now Our Place) and open heart provides hope and refuge to those who need it and humility for the rest of us. Humility and perspective. For a short while I joined Rev. Al’s team of volunteers and gradually grew more sympathetic towards those downtrodden souls. I am grateful for that experience and that Place.

I’m also grateful for my ex’s part in bringing home and helping train our excellent dog. “Slick” has been living with me now for years and I couldn’t ask for a better roommate.

Along with sharing my life with a perfect pet, most of my family has left Ontario and settled here in the Garden City. I don’t know how I’d get by without my sisters in town. And I feel pretty privileged to be able to visit my aging Dad everyday.

I’m grateful for Philippe Lucas and his committed team of knowledgeable caregivers at the Vancouver Island Compassion Society. Living with chronic pain can be both debilitating and depressing. The readily-available, hassle-free,organic herbal medicine that V.I.C.S. supplies, allows me to stay away from dangerous, ineffective pharmaceuticals and keeps my spirits from sinking into those navy blues. I am grateful for everybody struggling to change the archaic, counter-productive drug laws. Those devoted folks are all part of the solution.

I believe that many solutions lie within the spreading of information in an easily understood and entertaining way. From Michael Moore and his award winning documentaries to Al Gore and his Inconvenient Truth, it is reassuring that some Americans are fighting the right fight. Woody Harrelson’s “Go Farther” not only promotes a much healthier way of life, but is unforgettably inspiring. Oprah’s school for girls in Africa is so part of the solution that political leaders should feel ashamed of themselves for failing where a talk show host excels. And let’s not forget one of our Greatest Canadians, David Suzuki. I am grateful that so many celebs are using their fame and resources to help the world.

Our world is also helped by everyone who choses not to own a car. For every full-time cyclist out there, a big thank you. For every motorist that’s willing to share the road with us two-wheelers, thanks for letting me be part of the global solution. I am grateful for the Goose and a great (second-hand ) bike that never lets me down. And Slick and I are both grateful for Tony’s Trailers. He built me a mobile kennel which enables me to bring my dog everywhere.

I am grateful for everyone who didn’t vote for Stephen Harper and is looking outside the box (ie: the status quo) for some political leadership. Surely by now we know what (and who) doesn’t work so let’s look elsewhere.

And last but not least, I’m grateful for meeting Janine and becoming involved with the Victoria Street Newz. For all the supporters and readers of this fine, independent paper, especially those who have enjoyed my articles over the years, THANK YOU! My mind is in a much better place because of you all.

I began this piece last month with the intension of improving my mindset and “happy-ing” up for my birthday. As everyone in this boat will agree, poverty and chronic pain can easily weigh you down and suck the joy from your sails. By appreciating all the grand and minuscule things within our human experience that makes us whole, a fresh, new day will surely greet us. And for that, I am truly grateful.



It’s Called Respect  
by Jennifer Hastie

Hi Couz:

You know, lately I’ve been thinking a lot about the word “respect.” How do we know when we are respected? No one ever really tells us something like that.

Well, one thing for sure, you feel respected if people listen to you. Also, if you are supposed to get something because of your age or because you are next in line for something and the person in charge stands up for you, well, that is respect, right? And if you tell someone about a problem you have and they show interest without blaming you, well then you feel respected, right?



I guess that there are many ways to feel that you are respected.

Then I think about our First Nations’ peoples. Do we really respect them? Let’s think about that idea for a minute. Jim Hume, a newspaper guy for the Times Colonist recently wrote a good article talking about B.C. Native history—how the guys in control, as early as 1858, realized that they needed to make laws to protect the local natives from unfair treatment of them by the gold diggers. A man called “Lytton” (I guess that’s whom the town of Lytton is named after) urged the government to pass laws that would force the non-natives to change. Apparently Governor Douglas made some attempts “to respect the interests of the natives,” says Hume in his article. Douglas also cleared the early settlers off the Fraser River area where they were screwing up the food supply for the natives. Douglas hired tribal chiefs to help him sort out some of the problems.

However, in terms of Treaties having any effect, nothing was really honoured by us immigrants until about 1980, over 100 years later. Is that respect for Native peoples? I don’t think so.

Another thing bugs me about all of this, Couz. You know that big Treaty that the BC Government recently signed with the Tsawwassen group? I guess you are aware that a lot of other native tribes opposed the signing because some of their traditional lands were simply given away to the Tsawwassen group. A respected local native elder, Tom Sampson, told me that as far back as 1825 a number of the local tribes on the Islands here had an agreement with the Tsawwassens where each tribe could fish. This was one of their own Treaties and it worked very well. Yet, our present government ignored that agreement.. Is this respect for Natives’ ability to make their own decisions? I don’t think so, Couz.

One of the biggest sore points with Canadian natives today is the terrible way that our Natives were treated during the Residential School years. Although some money is finally coming through from the government to compensate for these terrible wrongs, the Feds have never apologized for allowing such bad stuff to occur. Yes, money helps to soothe things, Couz, but my belief is that a formal apology from the government is badly needed. Some say that the government won’t apologize because it is afraid of being sued. So there you have it; money means more to the Feds than doing the right thing. Is that respect? I don’t think so.

Well Couz, I have one more example of respect. Remember the recent inquest into Frank Paul’s death? He was the native who was dumped by the Vancouver Police after being in custody, dying very close to a detox centre. When David Instant, the Police Officer who was told to dump Paul, testified at the inquest into the death, he cried, admitted his guilt, and apologized to the family for his part in the tragedy. Peggy Clement, Paul’s cousin, replied to David Instant by saying that the family appreciated what he said. She added: “I would like to meet that man (David Instant) one day.” Is that respect? I think so.

Today, as I write to you, Couz, there are some concerned citizens from Saanich trying to rezone a large farm to make it into a live-in farming centre for homeless and drug-addicted people. The idea would be that such disadvantaged people would come out and live and work at the farm. They would grow, harvest and sell vegetables to the public.

Although I am really pleased that at least some people in our society are thinking over what they can do to help our disadvantaged, I want to ask them this question: Has anyone asked the presently homeless people what THEY want? Perhaps the homeless don’t like or can’t do farming. Perhaps they see that a computer course might be more worthwhile and interesting. For the most part, types like you and me get to decide what work fits our body and mindset best. We get to decide what skills are best for our future. Why should the homeless have this right taken away from them?

Now, I don’t know if the Saanich types have or have not consulted with disadvantaged peoples because the media is so skewed in what it chooses to report on matters. If they haven’t talked with the homeless, then that is bad news. I believe that the only way to do any sort of business with other people is to talk to them, the ones who will benefit, first. Our governments, at all levels, consistently make decisions without consulting people first. That attitude even goes for you and for me. A bad way to do business. Furthermore, it leads to the failure of so many of their programs.

No, Couz, I don’t think that town meetings are good enough, as too many people are spooked at the thought of speaking out. I also don’t think that referendums work--too many people don’t bother to vote. Also, it is now sounding like we can’t even vote in the next election unless we have a bunch of paperwork to prove who we are, including a home address. That’s a great idea for the homeless, eh! It seems to me that will simply make the voice of the homeless that much quieter.

Government must start spending a little money and making a little effort to actually talk to people. Yes, it takes longer, Couz. Yes, it is trickier than adding a question at the end of a voting ballot. Native peoples would be first to tell you that consultation takes time. They may remind you that they have rarely been listened to by the Government anyway.

And us guys, who pay the taxes, must be prepared to pay for that extra effort. It’s called respect, Couz, for those who are too spooked to speak out in public meetings and for those who have given up on the voting system. Surely, it is not going to cost each of us more than one coffee latte per month. Then, with more time, hopefully, offensive government employees will learn to take time with people in a user-friendly way.

It’s called respect, Couz.

Jennifer and her husband live in Victoria today. She is a healthy, active senior who enjoys writing volunteer articles for various publications.



An open letter to people in positions to effect real change.

From Ken Frenette

Richard LeBlanc and the board of the Creating Homefulness Society are again featured in the March issue of Focus Magazine.

They are asking for assistance from concerned citizens who will have the option of donating their carbon tax rebate cheque toward purchasing Woodwynn Farm.

Please read the article and think about a golden opportunity to set an example of sound decision-making instead of maintaining the Canadian tradition of government foot-dragging.

You municipal politicians are accustomed to low voter turn-out. Provincially and Federally turn-out will decline as older voters pass away and young potential voters remain wary of government corruption and arrogance.

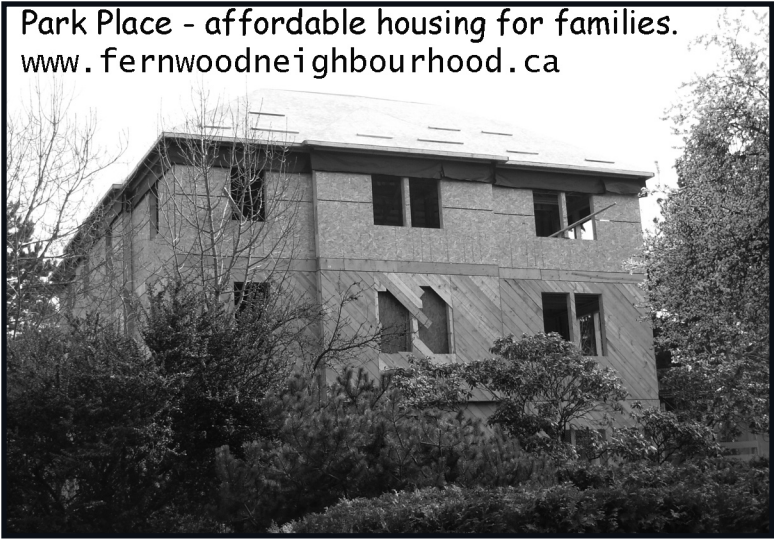
I intend to make a contribution and sincerely hope some of you will do the same.

Dear Readers - Red Again

You all know what I’m about so this writing cannot be a surprise. You know me as Red but I do have a name that you really won’t remember, so stop asking.

I may live on the outside, but I’m still here. I haven’t much to say because, between you and me, life is how you make it. Good or bad you make your way, though at times it seems you’re at the end but realize it’s just starting over. However, there is a price you have to pay, be it financially, emotionally, spiritually, it all comes down to one basic idea. Just believe in yourself no matter what. As for myself, so far I’m still here so I must be doing something right.

Park Place - affordable housing for families.  
www.fernwoodneighbourhood.ca



Gay men face discrimination when donating organs and blood

by Rachael Lake

In December 2007, Health Canada made changes to the organ donation policies, banning sexually active gay men. The policy excludes any man who has had sex with a man in the last five years, regardless of safe sex practices, from donating. These changes have refocused the attention of gay rights groups across the nation on both organ donation and the similar blood donation policies.

As it stands, men who have sex with men (MSM) are banned for life from giving blood. Canadian Blood Services (CBS), the organization responsible for blood, plasma, and bone marrow collection and distribution in Canada, screens donors based on broad group membership. Groups who CBS believes pose a high risk of having been infected with transfusion-transmissible diseases, such as HIV, hepatitis, and syphilis, are ineligible to give blood. This policy is currently being challenged in two court cases based on equality rights which are protected in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Every time a potential donor goes to give blood, a questionnaire must be completed to screen potential health risks. If certain questions are answered affirmatively, CBS will ask the person to return in six months or one year, but answering yes to other questions results in a lifetime ban from donating. For example, if you have had sex with someone whose sexual background you do not know, you would not be allowed to donate blood for six months. If you have had sex with a prostitute, you would not be allowed to donate for one year. However, if you are a man who has had sex with a man, even once since 1977, you will never be allowed to donate blood.

With respect to gay men, this policy is discriminating based on sexual orientation. To illustrate, a heterosexual male who has had unprotected sex with hundreds of women would be asked to return to donate in six months, but a gay or bisexual male who has been in a relationship with the same person for 20 years would not be allowed to donate, and would be asked never to return. Canadian Blood Services is not screening people based on unsafe sexual behaviours, but rather on irrelevant personal characteristics based on stereotypes and myths. Their policy perpetuates the stereotype that homosexual sex is dangerous and risky, while heterosexual sex is safe. The realities of HIV transmission in Canada prove otherwise. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, the rate of HIV infection among men who have

sex with men has dropped every year since 2001, and rates are increasing most rapidly among heterosexual women.

Equality rights in the Charter protect Canadians from discrimination based on sexual orientation. Obviously the safety of the blood supply is Canadian Blood Services’ primary concern, especially with the memory of the tainted blood tragedy in its recent history. However, CBS tests every unit of blood collected with extremely accurate results. When the policy was created in 1983, the tests were not as accurate and HIV and AIDS were not fully understood, so it made sense for CBS to screen donors as they currently do. But as the tests have become nearly flawless, it has become unnecessary, discriminatory and unconstitutional to continue to ban gay men from donating blood.

There is a dire need for blood and organs in Canada. It is unacceptable for CBS to continue to enforce this homophobic policy and perpetuate dangerous and inaccurate stereotypes. The Canadian Aids Society and EGALE (Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere) have called on CBS to change their policy and screen donors based on unsafe sexual practices rather than sexual orientation. These changes would better serve the safety and demand of the blood supply, while complying the constitutionally protected right to be free from discrimination.

To find out if you are eligible to donate blood, or to arrange an appointment to donate, visit Canadian Blood Service’s website at [www.blood.ca](http://www.blood.ca) or call 1-888-2-Donate.

To find out more about organ donation in British Columbia or to register as a donor, visit British Columbia Transplant Society’s website at [www.transplant.bc.ca](http://www.transplant.bc.ca) or call 1-800-663-6189.

*PBSC-UVic is a student organization that is not able to give legal advice. This article is intended as legal information only. Should you have a specific legal problem, it is advisable to consult a lawyer. Special thanks to Irene Faulkner of Underhill, Faulkner, Boies-Parker for her assistance. For more information on our organization, please visit: [www.pbsc-uvic.ca](http://www.pbsc-uvic.ca).*

*The UVic Chapter of Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC) wants to help answer some of your questions about the law. If you’d like to suggest a topic, please drop ideas off at Street Newz’s mailbox at 1027 Pandora Ave. or email us at [pbsc.articles@gmail.com](mailto:pbsc.articles@gmail.com).*



On Dollars and Doughboys

by George Simich

A common currency; a common army. A common con. On February 14, while we shared candy, kisses, and cards, Canadian and the U.S. officials signed another accord, paving the way for the militaries of either nation to deploy troops across each other’s borders in civil emergencies. Why has the Harper government not informed Canadians regarding this fundamental change to policy?

The U.S. Northern Command released a statement outlining the basic framework of the agreement. General Gene Renuart and Canadian Lt.-Gen. Marc Dumais, head of Canada Command, noted that the plan allows the military from one nation to support the armed forces of the other nation during civil emergencies.

Considering that people of both nations willingly assist each other during emergencies (Hurricane Juan, Hurricane Katrina, 9/11), why would it be necessary for the military to intervene? Apart from the extraordinary circumstances of Hurricane Katrina, when the Canadian Navy assisted in disaster relief, I cannot think of another occasion when military intervention was required.

Civilians can and do readily meet any crisis that arises; and it would be prudent for our two nations to develop a fully integrated civilian agency capable of responding to extraordinary circumstances. Create a bi-lateral FEMA that actually works.

Although the political left in Canada and the political right in the U.S. seldom agree on the time of day, they both question the merits and the meaning of such agreements, and how these accords will affect the sovereignty of each nation. The Council of Canadians, which is campaigning against what it calls the “increasing integration of the U.S. and Canadian militaries,” is raising concerns about this deal.

Stuart Trew averred “[i]t’s kind of a trend when it comes to issues of Canada—U.S. relations and contentious issues like military integration. We see that this government is reluctant to disclose information to Canadians that is readily available on American and Mexican websites.” Trew stated that there is potential for the agreement to militarize civilian responses to emergency incidents, noting that work is also underway for the two nations to put in place a joint plan to protect common infrastructure such as roads and pipelines. “Are we going to see [U.S.] troops on our soil for minor potential threats to a pipeline or a road?” he asked.

Continuing, Trew also noted the U.S. military refuses to allow its soldiers to operate under foreign command, so who controls American forces, when requested, for service in Canada. “We don’t know the answers because the government doesn’t want to even announce the plan,” he said.

Canada Command spokesperson, Commander David Scanlon, said civilian authorities must request military assistance. Scanlon stated that the agreement is “benign” and simply sets the stage for military-to-military co-operation. (How very comforting). The agreement, Scanlon continued, “facilitates planning and co-ordination between the two militaries. If U.S. forces entered Canada, they would be under tactical control of the Canadian Forces but still under the command of the U.S. military.

News of this backroom deal is already making the rounds on left wing blogs and Internet sites as another example of the dangers of the growing integration between the two countries. On right-wing blogs in the U.S., they assert that this plan clearly demonstrates the desire for a North American union (SPP, FTA, NAFTA) where economic, military, and social policy blurs in a fog of war on their own citizens.

*George Simich is a Rebel without a Pause for social justice, anti-war, anti-capital punishment, environmentalist, anti-nuke and fighting the good fight since Vietnam.*





Altering Nature for Parks: Cutting Cathedral Grove

By Richard Boyce

Using dynamite to blast the trunks of trees into smithereens may make falling a 600-year - old Douglas fir safer for the humans doing the work. That’s the contention of the workers compensation board with regards to the contractors working for BC Parks and the Ministry of Environment in Cathedral Grove. According to media reports there are 9 danger trees that must be felled in order to make it safe for tourists to walk on the paths in the Provincial Park.

Parks have always been designed by human beings for humans, and when their needs change so do the parameters of the parks. However there is a point where parks are altered by humans to the point that they no longer reflect the nature that they were designed to preserve.

Strathcona Park, the first and oldest BC Provincial Park established in 1911, has been dissected and compromised over the last century. Logging, highways, and mining have been allowed to alter the integrity of this park. Portions of the initial parkland have been pulled out of the protected area by government and sold or traded to logging companies.

Parks can also play a key role in rehabilitating a compromised ecosystem while providing recreational and educational opportunities for the public. A prime example locally is the Englishman River Regional Park, which runs upstream from Top Bridge to Morrison Creek. Officially opened to the public last fall by the Regional District of Nanaimo, the Nature Trust of British Columbia, and several other partners this park includes second and third growth trees ranging in age from freshly planted to approximately 50 years old depending on the age of the cut block. The park compliments the Salmon Enhancement Project, Englishman River Watershed Recovery Plan, and several other rehabilitation projects along the Englishman River. This park combines public needs with restoration presenting many opportunities through stream keepers and other groups that help to educate the public.

The needs of people and nature are interwoven and continue to be linked but society tends to try managing nature in order to tame it. Controlling nature may seem like a practical solution to societies fear of the wild but managing parks for people tends to compromise nature to the point that is destroyed. The BC Parks Act makes no bones about the fact that most parks, with the exception of certain components of a class “A” park, have been set aside for the public to use for recreational purposes.

Carmanah Provincial park, directly across the Island from Oceanside due south on the west coast, was protected in 1989 and the lower Walbran Valley was added in 1991. The public demanded this protection to save some of the last ancient temperate rainforest as well as to establish a reserve for the Marbled Murrelet to nest.

Logging has continued all around the Carmanah/Walbran park and today the clear-cuts run directly along the boundaries. All access to the park is on industrial logging roads and when the trees licensed for logging are gone from the companies that built these roads will have no reason to maintain them. In fact, 2 years ago TimberWest threatened to remove a key bridge so they could move it to another location. Already, the roads entering the park are in such bad shape that it discourages the public from visiting. With fewer and fewer visitors the government is already beginning to grumble that the primary purpose for a park is to provide the public with recreational opportunities. Industry has already built the roads in and would like to continue logging. Where is this leading? No people in the parks, unused timber just standing there rotting, roads in place, need for economic stability in a declining forest industry...



Richard Boyce is a documentary filmmaker and photo-journalist who has spent his life on Vancouver Island. www.islandlens.blogspot.com

Massive Transfer of Wealth from the Public to the Rich

by Gerry Masuda

A review of the past decade shows that the rich individuals and corporations have been the overwhelming winners from federal budgets and the Canadian public the loser.

After the drastic cut back in government services and programs in the late 1990s to eliminate the deficit, Finance Minister Paul Martin handed out \$100 billion in tax cuts over the next five years to the richest individuals and corporations. Jim Flaherty subsequently gave away over \$60 billion over three years. This is a fantastic transfer of wealth to the rich from a surplus resulting from cutbacks in government goods and services to the public.

Tax cuts are not a one time event. A tax cut means that the government ‘loses’ this income each subsequent year. The federal government which gave away \$160 billion in tax cuts has reduced its income by (160/8 =) \$20 billion per year.

If it were not for the ideological imperative towards smaller governments, there would have been alternative uses for this \$20 billion per year. What about a ‘guaranteed livable income’ to eliminate poverty and homelessness? What about making education free from child care to university? What about increasing healthcare budgets and a new Pharmacare program?

One way the public can counter the inordinate influence of the rich resulting from their election campaign contributions, is for you, your family and friends to start voting. If you are unhappy about the favouring of the rich, show your unhappiness by voting against the Conservatives and Liberals.

On Freedoms

by C’daoim



Freedom of speech sounds excellent doesn’t it?

Yet, when you think about it deeply enough, and history proves that our species has been thinking about it a lot over the millennia of recorded time, it all depends on two other necessities: freedom to be heard and freedom of thought. It’s the freedom of thought that is the wild card in the story. It would seem to be the easiest of the three to take ownership of, yet history demonstrates that it is the hardest, of the three freedoms I’ve mentioned, to actually achieve.

Freedom of speech and freedom to be heard are battles that our species has already faced but what good are they if you do not have freedom of thought?

The debates of the men (an era specific understanding that represented one class of men and in no way represented the species) within less then a century of the birth of our nation would create some of the ideas that were used in the shaping of our society. There were many different schools of thought on the idea of how a society should be structured, naturally opposed to each other. Eventually the “Economists” and their ideology would become the dominant force in the Western World. Yet, all the ideologies had some of the same things in common. They recognized that in their era they had escaped the systems of “indoctrination into inequality” that the species had lived under for thousands of years. They had opened their minds to the arena of freedom of thought and embraced it without fear. No longer was the species trapped inside the doctrines of the church, god-kings, tyrants and monarchies. They were free to think of other options for the species to evolve towards.

A large responsibility, and worthy of the length of time and the topics of these debates. But no matter which side of the debates a person would stand on at the time it was, actually, all the same. I think they missed the point of the debates completely and it is not because of their ineptitude but rather because they failed to see, the elephant in the room. And as a consequence they built the same type of ideological prison they had escaped from, the one we live in.

I believe where they all failed is in the fact that they had achieved freedom of thought and that is the “right” they should have protected and passed down to us. They should have guaranteed us the same privilege they had experienced. This would have given our society’s idea of progress a different motivating factor that did not return us to the idea that power serves wealth or inequality. Instead, all of their ideas included assigning roles and indoctrinating the rest of us to fill these roles, thus living just as their ancestors had lived, under the ideals of others. The fact that we can see so much inequality in our society demonstrates that we could possibly be trapped inside another “indoctrination into inequality,” and they don’t seem to work out so well. How is it we can accept the existence of poverty or the struggles to put a roof over our heads, without noticing we are surrounded by abundance?

They, also, all understood the power of education and the necessity it would play in developing a society. Some even understood that it could be misused as a form of indoctrination instead of education. William Godwin (1756-1836) believed that,

“State schools would only be another instrument of power in the hands of a government, worse even than a state Church. They would strengthen the poisonous influence of kings and statesmen and establish instead of abolishing prejudices”<sup>1</sup>

The answer is in education, but with this caveat you must take responsibility for educating yourself, which is one of the freedoms of being a citizen. The responsibility of the government is to teach you to adjust to a system that is class and wealth oriented. They take no responsibility to teach you how to become informed and implement change.

The result of the “18th Century Enlightenment” was to take the power and wealth away from the few and redistribute it to the many, which sounds good but what resulted was power and wealth being redistributed only to an elite part of society - the capitalist investors. They were able to achieve this by becoming educated, not indoctrinated, and taking the power of “freedom of thought” to unimagined heights, for that era. Then and only then were they able to utilize freedom of speech and freedom to be heard, and as a result they changed the world.

Become informed...society needs you !

<sup>1</sup> Bury B, John. Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into its Origin and Growth. New York: Dover Publications Inc.1955, pg 227.



Even Hybrid Cars are Death Machines

by Kalanu Buffalo

‘Environmentalism’ has become trendy. The use and impacts of energy resources are focused upon by the mainstream environmental movement as not only key targets but, in some cases, the only targets. Those of us who have long considered ourselves ‘environmentalists’ fear it may be too little too late as the movement is being co-opted by the very forces we struggle to defeat.

The crisis we face can be traced to decisions made over 10,000 years ago, compounded by millions of subsequent decisions. In the last 150 years we went from a species in equilibrium with its environment to one that is currently destroying all life. While this acceleration roughly corresponds with the rise of fossil fuel use, it is not these particular resources, or use thereof, that bear the entire responsibility for our current crisis.

Many old-school environmentalists define their ideology and activism not just by a desire to reduce carbon emissions but also by a desire to have an abundance of intact eco-systems and a broad diversity of life on the planet. Hybrid cars and compact fluorescent light bulbs may reduce the amount of carbon we emit, but unless we take a brutally critical approach to modern civilized life, species will continue to go extinct as we expand further into the wilderness.

The problem lies in the centralized, industrial way that we choose to support ourselves as a culture. ‘Eco-friendly’ products of the mass consumer culture require appalling amounts of water, energy, resources and labour to produce. These things need to be transported, and as industries have been globalized, the distances have increased to the absurd. Fuel used in production and transport is but one impact of the process. An army of heavy equipment, fabricated from steel, copper, zinc, iron and other resources (as well as petroleum products such as lubricants and plastic) are used to produce and transport ALL industrialized mass consumer products.

Where do these materials come from? Whose land? Where does the massive waste go? Whose land? Who builds the earth moving equipment and mining machinery? Who operates them? Who works in the factory that processes the raw materials and assembles the products? Who loads them onto trucks, ships, planes and trains? Who drives these vehicles? What are the working conditions for all these people? What kind of quality of life do they have? A great deal of exploitation is occurring around the world to bring us ‘sustainable’ products. The cost of retrofitting the world with green technology and fuelling it with energy that costs more to produce than fossil fuel doesn’t improve the lives of those who toil for our comfort.

A globalized mass consumer world is not compatible with the ideal of social justice for all. The industrial system requires slavery and exploitation. It requires increasing access to resources, which means displacing people, mainly poor and indigenous people, from their land base. A good local example is the development on Spaet (Bear) Mountain, in which the future of the local indigenous cultures, in jeopardy in part from diabetes and other health effects of the western diet, relies on access to traditional wild foods. By reducing their land base, we reduce their access to healthy food and sabotage their efforts to survive. This can reasonably be called genocide.

Mining and blasting processes, critical for ‘green energy’ infrastructure, are apocalyptic to any ecosystem. The waste they generate poisons rivers, lakes and oceans and in turn poisons people who rely on waterways for sustenance and survival.

Ideology that does not advocate eliminating dependence on a globalized industrial way of life cannot with any real conscience call itself ‘environmental,’ not in the sense that the word is to mean respect and active protection of biodiversity and ecological equilibrium. Any eco-philosophy that fails to take into account the impact of actions on all life from the smallest micro-organism to entire human cultures is but a means to feel good about excessive consumption and material addictions.

In the majority of the world people thrive, and have for hundreds of thousands of years, on far less, produced closer to home with less

Trees & Us

by Carmanagh Carson-Austin

The sound of laughter and music softly filters through the lichen hanging from the 800 year old trees in the Ancient Forest. I can see the fire light dancing to the music in the eyes of my friends. The wrinkled wise eyes of the elders, the determined eyes of the youth, and the playful eyes of my younger siblings, share the rhythm of the flames. The drum beats almost seem to pull spirits out of the giant trees of Cathedral Grove. I drift in and out of sleep to a chorus of “All we are saying is Give Peace a Chance.” The lyrical voices of forest spirits whisper dreams in my ears.

BANG! The tire of my family’s motorhome explodes. A knife flashes in the pitch black. The peaceful songs, spirits and dreams shatter, replaced by voices coming from the shadows. We watch from the firelight holding our breath. Threats are hurled from the blackness. They curse as they stumble over gnarled roots. Its is scary how serious these people are and how much they hate us. We have never done anything to them. This isn’t the first time this has happened in the camp. On-going threats are yelled at us from the nearby highway on a daily basis. Some of the braver souls drunk on liquid courage even shot members of the camp with frozen paint balls. Car windows were smashed. A friend’s car, which was her home, was torched and burned. A dead animals wa hung in effigy. Imagine how it feels, how frightening it is, to have some knife wielding drunk or for all you know lunatic, lurking in the dark, just feet from where you are sleeping.

These are just ordinary everyday normal law abiding people. What turns them into someone who could invade our peaceful camp, high and wielding knives? Why don’t the police do anything? The truth is that the police don’t have to do anything when someone as powerful as the Premier of British Columbia publicly calls you a “Eco terrorist” or “The Enemy Within.” The media makes you out to be dirty hippies. People talk about you like some crazy dirty animals in the woods. When you are dehumanized it gives people the right to do whatever they like and have it overlooked.

A witch-hunt is defined as: “An investigation or intensive systematic campaign carried out ostensibly to uncover subversive activities but actually used to harass and undermine those with differing views.”

When I look around at these vegetarian, peace loving, non-violent, friendly people, it is hard to reconcile this demonization with their gentle natures. These are people whose primary purpose is to protect endangered plant and animal communities. They are tree huggers. They care about our future and the health of our planet. If this is what a witch is I’m proud to be one.

This witch hunt is not over. Three years later, a new eco system is in danger. A protest is set up by old friends to protect wet lands and ancient karst caves near Goldstream Park at the entrance to Victoria on Vancouver Island, BC, from being demolished to make way for a bypass and urban sprawl. Here things are changing and different from our experience three years ago. The police do come now. And they come with guns loaded, riot gear on, machine guns at the ready, dogs pulling on their chains with teeth flashing. The whole bit. Unfortunately this authority has not come to help. They have come to threaten and move my friends from the trees and their tents at gunpoint. Sixty policemen were brought in to move 7 protesters. I never even knew there weere 60 police men on the island. Why are they working for the developers? I learned that Police are the defenders of the People not defenders of private corporations. Is this the image of the heroes that we have been taught to love?

On the front page of our local newspaper I look into the saddened eyes of Ingmar Lee, a compassionate, gentle and free man. He has quietly risen to challenge those who perceive themselves as god and believe they can do as they wish to our forest and not be harmed. Seeing a man like Ingmar handcuffed, forced to watch a place he loves being torn down as fast as his friends are being hauled out of a forest where Owls are returning to what was once their home, is devastating and disheartening.

Carmanagh is 17 years old, living in Qualicum Beach. She’s taken a semester off school to pursue an interest in environmental video documentary.

resources, used more efficiently for longer periods, and discarded in a way that can even contribute to new products.

Sustainable energy sources are direct solar (to heat food, water, grow food, etc), methane digesting of food waste to produce electricity, heating and cooking fuel, and other technologies that can be built and maintained on a personal or community level. Energy reduction is achieved by localizing resource use and reducing unnecessary transportation, and eliminating products that the privileged world takes for granted.

Those who live with abundant resources could do a better job of utilizing the resources. Cities could grow food on rooftops, or in yards only used for ornamental grass and shrubs. Rainwater and grey water can reduce impact on watersheds and oceans.

Truly ‘sustainable’ products and energy are harvested and produced nearby, with the least possible impact on the natural environment, with attention to quality (so they last), that fill a needed role in our lives, and can be re-used, recycled or discarded in a way that creates the least impact. All other products are destructive and counter-productive to our struggle to survive on a healthy planet.

The green consumer movement is not ‘environmentally friendly.’ If the power to ‘save the environment’ is in the hands of the people, than we need to use those hands to create the world we want, not to hand power over to the corporations and governments to pervert and waste. It’s time we examine the impacts of every aspect of our lives, and take radical alternatives seriously.





The Transformation of Cuba

from Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba

In his latest “Reflections of the Commander in Chief” Fidel Castro made an important decision. He decided not to accept the nomination to continue on as the president of Cuba’s State Council, which is also the position of president of Cuba.


Regardless of how the news media in Canada and the US try to portrait this decision as a set back for the Cuban revolution and towards a so-called “transition to democracy,” Fidel’s decision above all shows his ultimate confidence in the current leadership and government of Cuba. In fact, this decision shows a strong belief in their capability to direct the Cuban people and their revolution towards more social gains.

On July 31 2006, due to ill health and emergency surgery, Fidel temporarily stepped down from some of his responsibilities. For the last year and a half he has been working to improve his health and has proved with his reflections that he has an important contribution to make towards the advancement of social justice and politics on the world scene. With refusing to accept a nomination to the State Council, he will continue in his fullest capacity to advise us and the people of Cuba with his ideas and insight on global politics today.

Under Fidel’s leadership:

- Cuba has educated and trained so many doctors that it now has the highest number of doctors per capita of any country in the world.
- Cuba has eliminated illiteracy.
- Cuba has a 1.9% unemployment rate, which is below the 3% established as full employment by international organizations.
- Cuba has an infant mortality rate of 6 deaths per 1,000, a lower figure than any country in Latin America and even lower than the United States.

What is happening in Cuba right now is nothing but a simple natural transition of political responsibility to the current leadership. We support our Comandante Fidel’s decision and we will continue to stand by him. For Fidel this is by no means a retreat from his great role of leadership in the Cuban revolution. As he said, “This is not my farewell to you. My only wish is to fight as a soldier in the battle of ideas.”



Oh, for the Love of the Olympics !!

by Betty Krawczyk (bettysearlyedition.blogspot.com)

Love? Oh, no. It’s actually money. I’ll keep it simple.

Millennium Development Corporation got the nod to build the Athletes’ Village on Southeast False Creek for the Olympics which will include 1100 condos of which 250 will belong to the City after the games. For this privilege Millennium will pay us, the city, 193 million, 30 million will be a down payment.

These condos are not for the working poor. They will go for between 500,000 and 6 million. Millennium will also receive over 82 million for building them and we will do the site fixing at another 153 million. There are two directors (Shahram and Sharokh Malekyazdi) who hold no board meetings, issue no shares and do not file the required annual financial paper with the Ministry of Finance. They are partnered with Armeco Group of Companies. Armeco has one director, Paul Barbeau, a lawyer who recently headed the Vancouver NPA party.

But where can these corporations, wealthy though they are, get such huge amounts of money? Well, there are two lenders... The Fortress Credit Corporation and guess who? It’s us! The City of Vancouver! We pay them for borrowing money from us so they can make billions. But if we have this kind of money to lend out for the already super rich people why don’t we do something about the homeless? Or affordable housing? No money for that? Or money in that?

I think Gordon Campbell, VANOC, Millennium and Fortress along with Paul Barbeau are guilty of conspiracy to defraud the public. I’ll be pouring over my law books.

A Palestinian Perspective

By Mohammed Omer (www.rafahtoday.org)

March 3, 2008  
Gaza City, Mar 1 (IPS)

Courtesy of Inter Press Service and  
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Tamer was nine, and no child soldier. He did not live in the area from where home-made rockets are launched into Israeli territory. The day he was killed, he was at least two kilometres from the place Israeli troops had entered Gaza, and met with return fire by Palestinian resistance.

His tragedy was that the family home was near Deir al-Balah in the middle of the Gaza Strip, close to the area the Israelis have set up as their Kussfim base.



“We were all inside the house when shooting started,” Tamer’s aunt Etaf tells IPS. “It was right after members of the Palestinian resistance stopped shooting at Israeli troops,” she said, pointing towards the scene of those clashes a couple of kilometres away. But the Israelis marched into this area as well, hardly for the first time.

Members of the family decided to crawl out into the rain after a bullet hit a gas cylinder, Etaf said. “But Israeli soldiers continued to fire on us from a tank and Hummer military jeep.” After some time, seeing that the gas cylinder had not exploded, Etaf said she crawled back into the house. Tamer followed, but never made it. “I saw Tamer shot, with a bullet in his head.”

“He wanted to become a doctor when he grew up,” says his mother Sabah Abu Shaar.

Like Tamer, other children are dying, and their mothers’ dreams with them. A six-month infant named Mohammed al-Bourai was killed when an Israeli missile crashed into the house Wednesday this week, moments after he’d been fed. The family house happens to be close to the offices of Gaza’s ministry of interior, and to the house of de facto Gaza Prime Minister Ismail Hanyieh.

The same day, three other Palestinian children were killed in an air strike. The following day, four Palestinian children were killed near the Jabaliya refugee camp while playing soccer. Two of the boys, all aged 7 to 14, were from the same family. A child’s body was found in eastern Gaza, a victim of Israeli shelling.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs says in a Gaza fact sheet that 80 Palestinians were killed in January of this year, and 82 were injured. The January deaths included four children and five women. The Israeli casualties through the month were nine injuries from home-made rockets.

Just over the past three days, Israeli air strikes have killed at least 35 Palestinians, among them nine children. Many more are injured, and some are in critical condition.

Following Friday prayers, tens of thousands of Gazans came out on the streets in protest against the Israeli air strikes. Matan Vilnai, Israeli deputy defence minister, has said that Gaza faces a “holocaust” if the home-made rockets do not stop. Since May 2007, these rockets have killed one Israeli.

Emergency medical care is now threatened. The head of the ambulance department at Shifa hospital says he has just 20 litres of fuel left in stock for the ambulances. Once this runs out, little help will be available to victims of the next Israeli attacks.

Israeli attacks and firing are now so continuous that many in Deir al-Balah say they cannot sleep. “We can’t feel safe here,” says Tashaeel, one of Tamer’s elder sisters. “If we’d also left with Tamer, their bullets would have made a harvest of us all.”

The family has tried in vain for UN help in moving to another area. “Bullets chase us day and night,” says mother Sabah. “We can’t go out, and we have nowhere else to go. No money to move to a safer place where I could save the lives of my children. Last week Israeli soldiers had attacked our house, and ordered my seven daughters, two sons and myself into the rain, with their dangerous dogs scaring us away,” Sabah said. “Then they ransacked our house for several hours, leaving it in total chaos before we were allowed back in.” Such raids are common, she said.

Tamer was killed in the next one. The grieving family is now without water after bullets punctured the overhead tank. The walls of the house are pock-marked with bullet holes. And all the time they fear that Israeli bulldozers will bring down this too.

As Palestinians in Gaza wait for more Israeli attacks, UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon has expressed strong concern. “These events underscore the urgent need for a calming of violence, and must not be allowed to deter the continuation of the political process,” he said. But such statements mean little on the ground, and people in Gaza see no international action to stop Israel.

“Gaza today faces a real war, a crazy war,” Haniyeh said during Friday prayers near the Shati refugee camp. He also criticised the U.S. for accepting Israeli claims of ‘legitimate self-defence’. Despite Israel’s best attempts at ostracising Haniyeh, his popularity seems only to have increased.

Mohammed Omer, 22, was born and raised in the Rafah refugee camp, in the southern Gaza Strip near the Egyptian border. He was honored by New American Media as “Best Youth Voice” for 2006.





Night on Bear Mountain:  
When the Crown is Corrupt, Civil Disobediants Defend the Rule Of Law  
by Tavis W Dodds

I hadn’t planned to report on the Langford Tree-Sit, tent-city, tarped ewok-village blocking highway expansion near Victoria since April, 07. I’d planned to report on the Right to Sleep Charter Challenge, but, as fate would have it, the BC Supreme Court Case was put off yet again, this time until June. So, in the hopes that the trip wouldn’t be a total loss, I headed to Langford one wet January evening, and, as fate would have it, the next day I was to witness one of seven times that campers blocked work on the highway.

The #50 bus turns on Goldstream Road and I get off into a heavy rain. Two blocks east is Leigh road, a quiet cul-de-sac of homes built on rock beds of Gerry Oak and Arbutus trees. At the



end I see I’m in the right place: a barricade rises out of the ditch. Objects are piled there: tonka toys, Tibetan prayer flags, a TV set and a sign in red spray-paint: “The Sprawl Ends Here!”

A muddy path around the barricade enters the forest through multi-coloured string woven into a dream-catcher fence, a platform built above the gate. A huge tee-pee/wigwam of tarps is lit from within by a fire. Luke invites me in.

Luke and I speak for hours, listening to the

camp’s tiny stereo. Luke quotes from “Homage To Catalonia,” drawing parallels between the camp and the Spanish Civil War. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, he says, came up with the idea of the social contract, in which people agree to remain subjects of a state so long as the state improves their lifestyle. Thomas Payne and John Locke popularized it in America. Thoreau came across it and decided to test it, moving into the bush, and he thinks, ‘Hey, you know what? This is pretty good.’

Luke returns to his post fifty feet up in the canopy. I gather several sleeping bags, put another log on the fire, and curl up on a small sofa.

In the morning I meet Dan, a young guy with a big beard. He shows me the kitchen area. A big table is covered with food. Matt makes pancakes while talking of cooking roadkill from the highway. I tell him about writing this article. “Don’t write that there are only three people here!”

Matt is an environmental sciences student at UVic taking a semester off to “learn to walk the walk.” He says everyone he’s met in two weeks at the camp are “awesome, a lot of them making big personal sacrifices, not out for money, not even out to get laid.”

Surveyors are seen working on the highway. Three of us go. A young guy says “We’re not supposed to talk to you.” We stand in front of the equipment. An older guy in the truck makes a phone call. “You get a break from work in the rain,” I joke. “I never work in the rain!” he says, “We’re going for a walk and then we’ll bugger off.”

Minutes after they leave two Langford By-Law Enforcement officers arrive. They wouldn’t identify themselves: “Luke knows who we are.” We follow them up to the tent of a squatter, a camper living independently from the camp with his little cat. “Way bigger developments are going on all around the area, huge clear cuts, and the tree-sit is here in some second-growth bush. The cave is protected. The pond is protected. You’re supposed to be stewards of the land? These logs you’re burning are a natural part of the forest floor.”

I crawl into the cave, a little hole that opens up into a very small chamber. A crawl space two feet wide opens into a chamber with little rooms of its own. Another hole, partially submerged, opens into meters of lakes, the water high from the rain. It feels secure in the earth; I partly want to stay.

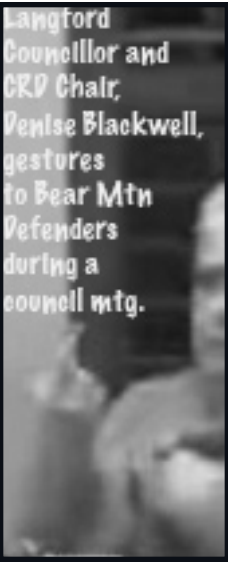


As I leave the camp a rally of supporters arrive, heading into the community in teams of two with a petition against the town going 25 million in debt for the road expansion. More than two thousand signatures were submitted to the City days before police raid the camp Feb 13th at 6AM.

Campers on the ground awake to attack dogs and 60+ officers with assault rifles and other weaponry. Police climb the trees, taking people. Luke evades them by climbing from tree to tree. As soon as he was out, machines started taking down trees. Nearly all the belongings went

straight to the dump. Welders sealed the cave shut with bars.

Demonstrators continued to block trucks, some were arrested. Youths climbed into three Garry Oaks. Several local First Nations leaders expressed their outrage at the desecration of their sacred site and of the graves there. The sound of blasting rings out in the valleys as groups demonstrate against BC’s frenzy of logging, development, and highway expansion.



Jackboot Nation  
by Brian Mason

They arrived in the near-dark, predawn hours and didn’t leave. And they won’t, if you don’t do anything. They’re the jackboots of democracy, this time coming down hard in Langford on the morning of February 13, 2008.

By now the facts are well known. Without warning, over fifty heavily-armed, well-organized police raided a tiny handful of sleeping, unarmed, nonviolent campers who were resisting the ugly sprawl of Bear Mountain. They created a large no-go, no-protest zone – like police did at the free trade summit in Quebec City and at the G8 meeting in Kananaskis – during and after the raid, which isolated the campers. It forced other protesters, as well as the media, to retreat far from

the police attack and the ensuing destruction of the forest. No witnesses were wanted.

Dissent in the post-9/11 world has become risky, subject to unprecedented levels of police intervention. The authorities have stocked up with the latest weapons of protest destruction, which they are not afraid to use or threaten to use. Theirs is a tactic of violent intimidation. They’ve become thugs – assuming the worst in every encounter, aggravating most situations with their mere presence, and routinely employing great shows of force.

If you aren’t part of the the Bear Mountain resistance, you might think this latest episode of police brutality has nothing to do with you. Think again. It threatens the very core of democracy and freedom of speech for every one of us. The police want all citizens to realise what will happen when dissent becomes effective.



Yet a further chill has been added to the democratic air as this climate of fear builds. Mayor Stew Young wants Langford, imitating U.S.-style SLAPP-suits used by corporations and governments to intimidate opponents, to sue some protesters to help recover the costs of the police operation itself. First you get brutalised, then sent a bill: a metaphor for capitalism.

We remain free as always to wave placards uselessly on the lawns of the legislature or to march from Centennial Square in a protest parade – with a police escort even. And you can still write letters of despair to politicians or the editors of corporate media.

But make no mistake about it, once your dissent begins to work, once it dares to insert a wrench into the machinery of capitalism – as soon as you get in the way of profit – you will experience the full wrath of heavily-armed state power. That’s democracy for you.

Legal big shots will carefully explain that it’s all being done to uphold the rule of law and protect property rights. Whose law and whose rights, you might well ask? Property rights in the modern sense had its humble beginnings in the liberal writings of 17th century philosopher John Locke; but he was intending it on a personal level – your home, your money, your farm and your personal possessions. He could never have imagined a world of advanced capitalism where corporations have been accorded similar rights as individuals.

It’s taken huge tracts of land out of the commons and into the hands of private developers, all protected by coercive state power. Small ironies abound: Ingmar Lee gets arrested for blocking a road already blocked by police to allow unimpeded destruction of the forest. At the same time, on the other side of the woods, traffic on Highway 1 was being stopped so tree-felling equipment could crunch through the forest with abandon. Blockades for capitalist greed are okay; blockades to save the planet are criminal. It’s a twisted system of values, upheld by the glorious rule of law.

The police are digging in, emboldened by their successes and the apparent lack of widespread civil resistance to their shows of force. People become afraid to speak up. Who wants to be arrested by these goons? They play rough, like when they took down Ingmar. They want you to think twice before acting up and speaking out. And you will.

Except....there’s another way to look at this, which the police would rather you not think about: they’re hugely outnumbered. (The city of Victoria, with about 80,000 residents, has fewer than 240 police officers, most being off duty at any moment.) They’re allowed to control us only to the extent that we let them – and because, mostly, we control ourselves. Police are effective only as long as we’re compliant, as long as they maintain our confidence and respect. They lost both on February 13 in Langford.

The irony in police using gratuitous shows of force is that the tactic often backfires: it awakens the citizenry. Police would never have enough reinforcements were that to occur. Consider how many of them it took to dislodge a few sleeping, nonviolent protesters. Just imagine had there been 600 campers. Or 6,000. And more elsewhere. Bear Mountain would be stopped in its bulldozer tracks.





Update from Grand River

by Hazel E. Hill

February 28th marked the two year anniversary of the reclamation of the lands of Kanonhstaton. It was a day marked with quiet celebration and a symbolic walk back onto the land. People walked carrying flags, but moreso, they walked carrying with them the pride, determination and honour of our ancestors, and knowing that they’re upholding their obligations to our Law and protecting the future of our people.

For over two years we’ve heard the echoes of politicians and canadian citizens alike who don’t understand that obligation, but only holler about the ‘rule of law’ and ‘one law for all people.’ I would suggest that those politicians and canadian citizens should be asking themselves why they aren’t making sure about that ‘rule of law’ and ‘one law for all’ when the rule of law is being violated by their own government.

Why is it, that they are not hollering those words at the municipalities, ontario and canada who continue to break that ‘rule of law’ every time they issue a new development permit and fail to honour their supreme court decision that states they must consult, accomodate and more often than not, compensate the ‘first nations’ people.

Why aren’t they hollering at the opp and other policing agencies about charging the developers or municipalities who are developing land knowing full well that those lands are unceded territory of the Haudenosaunee, or in their own words, ‘under native land claims.’

Why aren’t they hollering rule of law at the doj lawyers who sit in on those negotiations, knowing full well that canada is guilty of a crime, and yet they have done nothing to report that crime or uphold their obligations to the crown by exposing and bringing charges against canada.

Why aren’t they hollering rule of law at their prime minister & mp’s who know full well that their supreme court decisions say they have to consult, and yet they stand by their ontario land registry system that simply says they need only notify.

Why aren’t they hollering rule of law when the grand river notification act is a clear violation of their own laws, and yet being upheld by their own government.

Why is it they don’t holler about the rule of law when their judges sit in conflict and make decisions about lands that they themselves are in possession of, knowing that those lands were taken out of theft & fraud.

Why is it they don’t holler rule of law when those same judges, knowing their supreme court decisions haven’t been upheld, ignore that rule of law and issue injunction orders against those ‘first nations’ who try to stop development, and knowing their law says they are required to consult with, and therefore are violating their own ‘duty’ or ‘obligation’ to uphold that rule of law.

Why is it they aren’t hollering rule of law when their government continues to tax their own citizens on lands that they have no legal title to.

Why aren’t they hollering rule of law when their real estate lawyers sign off on a piece of property without telling them that the land is under what they call a ‘native land claim.’

Why aren’t they hollering rule of law while ontario and canadian representatives sit at the negotiations table supposedly at peace, and yet fail to provide proof of their purported surrenders, and knowing full well that they have not met their legal obligation with respect to those purported surrenders.

Why aren’t they hollering rule of law when the very road they travel on to get to their little town, their ontario representatives have already openly admitted they merely assumed jurisdiction and they don’t have any legal authority over.

Why aren’t they hollering rule of law, instead of trying to paint us as terrorists, while every day they are bringing in heavy machinery onto our lands, uprooting trees, destroying our watersheds, and violating the natural habitat of the animals, the fish and the birds.

Why aren’t they hollering rule of law and stopping the terrorism of our future generations as they gobble up our greenspace and pollute the very mother that sustains us all.

Why aren’t they hollering rule of law to canada as it terrorizes its own people by continuing to bring in settlers onto already overpopulated lands and continuing to build roads and bridges and housing development on lands that have been historically used to grow food for your children.

Why aren’t they hollering rule of law while they lose their homes and life savings for failing to pay taxes on lands that their government has no authority to collect.

Why is it that the rule of law only applies when they feel that somehow the ‘first nations’ people have violated it.

Why indeed!



Speaking my truth....

by Shelley Bluejay Pierce

Our world’s leaders have seemingly lost their minds in regard to what is SAFE for all of creation vs. what is a death sentence. Now that the global warming issue has garnered some much needed attention, we have another whole wing of folks ready to force us all into thinking that NUCLEAR is the “only option.” Really? Sure about that?

This topic is something that I rarely go into much personal depth on but perhaps it is time that I do so. I have outlived what the medical professionals said that I would for 19 years... I hope I can manage a few more. But today? I am finally speaking out on something that I have never written about.... it is time I think.

I am living with an extremely RARE combination of auto-immune illnesses...so rare to have 5 of these diseases hit you all at once, that there were only two top specialists at John Hopkins and Baylor University to have ever seen anything like my messed up immune system. There have been so many opinions as to how I would end up in this situation but only in the last decade has some alarming “new” information begun to surface.

I was born and lived my first 20 years of life in Denver Colorado. I lived down wind and water supply from Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapon plant. For decades, the “officials” told all the area residents that there was absolutely nothing to be worried about with the plant being right there.

When I was just 7 years old, I became very sick. My thyroid gland quit functioning. I suffered damage to my eyes and sense of balance....my joints swelled, I had “odd” things that no one could

explain. Gee, now that the real facts are revealed about the uranium wastes and the actual leaks that they had at Rocky Flats (of course, none of them were told to the public!) maybe things with my health make more sense? Maybe...

My mother was a public health nurse and she found some rare cancers popping up in the rural areas near Rocky Flats. Some of her patients were ranchers and they reported having two-headed calves being born and other weird things happening in the animal populations. My mother had 5 patients, all in one area, with a rare type of brain cancer. NOT a normal situation.

My mother went to the Director of the Health Department, Dr. Carl Johnson, and told him of her findings. He believed her and went after the information like a badger. He had found proof of the radiation and damages being done due to Rocky Flats but the “powers that be” didn’t want that kind of information out. Dr. Johnson and my mother were threatened, followed, and harassed for speaking out.

My mother was just 6 months away from full retirement and the county fired her. She lost ALL her pension and everything she had worked so many decades for. Can anyone remember the movie “Silkwood?” Yes indeed. Dr. Johnson went on a crusade against the deception, he went to every conference he could, wrote papers, and of course, was fired from the health department also.

Here are some links to the Rocky Flats information. I include them here for you as my way of speaking out against the real horrors of the long-term, life long health injuries that people must live with. I am one of them, I think.

[www.isis-online.org/publications/usfacilities/Rfpbrf.html](http://www.isis-online.org/publications/usfacilities/Rfpbrf.html)  
[www.ratical.org/radiation/KillingOurOwn/KOO8.html](http://www.ratical.org/radiation/KillingOurOwn/KOO8.html)  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl\\_J.\\_Johnson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_J._Johnson)

I can remember going out with my mother on some weekend calls to her patients’ homes and ranches out near Rocky Flats. I played with their animals, played in the dirt, breathed the air and even drank the water out there on occasion. For many decades I have lived a “half-life” because I cannot see to drive, have complications with the adrenal system and circulatory system, joint problems... well, you name it. Life has not been easy for me or for my loved ones who have helped me limp along through the time since I was only 7 years old.

Why speak out now? Well, I guess I feel like I am running a bit low on time lately. I have spoken out on things in the indigenous community, stood for truth when it comes to agencies like FEMA and etc. At this point, I am too ill to care much about what anyone thinks or believes about our government and its agencies that are SUPPOSED to care about the citizens. I just know some truths. I have lived them. My mother and Dr. Johnson lost their careers speaking out on this one topic.

When in the world will we WAKE UP and see that uranium mining, use and development is a FATAL mistake? Perhaps not in my lifetime, though I hope that my sharing of a very personal part of my life may open a few eyes out there. I pray that will be the case, in hopes that no one in the future will live with the kind of illness I have had to deal with for decades.

I wish each of you a lovely day. May you be surrounded by all good things.





Can't Stop Your Mind From The Wander

You can't stop your mind from the wander  
People think you're mad as thick thunder  
Fail to see fun in the free blunderthought  
Be quiet: they say: Won't you shut up  
With lipsticks of crazy glue they come at you  
Worse - a boxing glove - in a sock in a shoe  
In the world where the Tribe can still rule you  
Being yourself can be hard and you're a pain  
Unimaginings after all make us all 'bout the same  
Talking of boxes in them or outside them  
In a black line in a graph or some social sub-group  
Well I'm an egg that's a bit cracked among eggs  
Sometimes vague sometimes intact or lacking  
I'm a statistic of one amongst others  
I'm an island amongst islands in the stream  
I'm a cloud in a memory a thought in a dream  
I'm a road I'm a rebel I'm a rock I'm some moss  
I'm important I'm bright and I'm dross  
I'm a force for the better in a wind and no sail  
I'm a monkey I'm a donkey I'm a camel and a worm  
I'm all grumpy and lumpy and bumpy and lonesome  
I'm a foam and earth duck and a plastic milk truck  
I'm a curmudgeon  
I'm a dreamer and I'm from Trafalador  
I'm a drawer of none  
And I'm a valley of excess  
I'm a slip-road down to downtown  
And I'm a highway of hawthorn and heather.

© Paul Burnside

O KANADUH

O Kanaduh!  
This homeless native's land!  
Watch our children starve as our MP's grandstand.  
  
With growing doubt we see thee writhe,  
The True North bought and sold!  
  
From far and wide,  
Our Kanaduh, we're left out in the cold.  
  
God keep our land vaingloriously free!  
Our Kanaduh stands on ceremony.  
  
Our Kanaduh stands on ceremony.

George Simich

Earth's Ten Commandments

1. Thou shalt love and honor the Earth for it blesses thy life and governs thy survival.
2. Thou shalt keep each day sacred to the Earth and celebrate the turning of its seasons.
3. Thou shalt not hold thyself above other living things nor drive them to extinction.
4. Thou shalt give thanks for thy food to the creatures and plants that nourish thee.
5. Thou shalt limit thy offspring for multitudes of people are a burden unto the Earth.
6. Thou shalt not kill nor waste Earth's riches upon weapons of war.
7. Thou shalt not pursue profit at the Earth's expense but strive to restore its damaged majesty.
8. Thou shalt not hide from thyself or others the consequences of thy actions upon the Earth.
9. Thou shalt not steal from future generations by impoverishing or poisoning the Earth.
10. Thou shalt consume material goods in moderation so all may share Earth's bounty.

by Ernest Callenbach (Author of Ecotopia)  
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stand up and you will be shot down

stand up and a giant demon will grin at the audacity and mortally blacklist you from any construct of the world of private property

stand up and the monster will make the rest of your life free of freedom from oppression; will attack your friends and family with the threat of rape and murder for the rest of their days.

essentially, the only point of productiveness comes when there is nothing left to lose. Even all the shopping cart people have too much shit. The drug dealers and the cops come from the same retardation- the world is fucked so I'll do what I have to to get by... the cops believe the meaning of life too far so they content themselves with the little lies of those who maintain 'order'... the drug dealers pretend they are helping people see God while they profit off the addiction of the naive... the whole while both are controlled by a delusion that they are allowed to be mean in the furthering of their jobs....

so the question is- "What assets do we hold back in the hopes that we'll get a life apart from the monster?"

nothing to lose. nothing to lose. nothing to lose.

David Arthur Johnston





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thanks for the work you are doing ... it's people like you that make it worthwhile (or able) for me to go on  
anonymous

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Even when laws have been written down, they ought not always to remain unaltered.

Aristotle



James Christian  
B.Sc. (Herbal Medicine), MNIMH, RH  
Medical Herbalist

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